

REMARKS

Applicant thanks the Examiner for the telephone interview granted December 19, at which time it was agreed that claim 20 as amended overcame the Section 112, paragraph 2 objections. During the interview, it was agreed that as to the remaining claims for which Section 112, paragraph 2 objections were made, that Applicant would amend these claims, if necessary, to avoid antecedent basis problems. This has been done.

The Examiner indicated that claims 21 and 25-26 would be allowable if rewritten in independent form. This has been done.

Claims 20, 22, and 28 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102 as anticipated by Morris. Claims 23-24 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103 as unpatentable over Morris.

Claim 20 distinguishes over Morris at least by reciting the container bridging stabilizer having a single inter-box connector receiving aperture only and wherein both of said adjacent inter-box connectors are positioned in said single inter-box connector receiving aperture. In Morris, the bridging stabilizer has two separate apertures with an inter-box connector being received in each of said two apertures in the single bridging stabilizer. Thus, with the method of the present invention of claim 20, the weight of the container bridging stabilizer is reduced and it is easier to locate the bridging stabilizer over the two adjacent inter-box connectors.

Dependent claims 22-24 distinguish at least by reciting additional features in combination with claim 20 not suggested by Morris.

Independent claim 28 distinguishes over Morris at least by reciting the bridging stabilizer having at least one container spacer projecting from said bridging stabilizer and wherein said at least one container spacer is located in a gap between the first and second stacks. Morris has no such container spacer. With the container spacer, the space between the adjacent stacks is maintained.

Dependent claims 29-31 distinguish at least for the reasons claim 28 distinguishes and also by reciting additional features not suggested. For example, dependent claim 29 recites both an upper projecting container spacer which projects and a lower container spacer which projects. Morris has no spacers. Claim 30 distinguishes at least by reciting a single connector receiving aperture only with both of said adjacent connectors being located within said single connector receiving aperture. As explained above for claim 20, Morris does not have this.

Finally, dependent claim 31 distinguishes at least by reciting the single connector receiving aperture having two projections, with each projection defining a respective region for receiving a respective one of said two adjacent connectors. Morris has two apertures in his plate and does not have a single aperture or projections defining the recited regions.

If the Examiner has any remaining claim issues, such as for example Section 112, paragraph 2 claim language issues, a telephone interview is suggested to resolve such issues by Examiner's Amendment to allow this case to pass to issue.

Allowance of the case is respectfully requested.

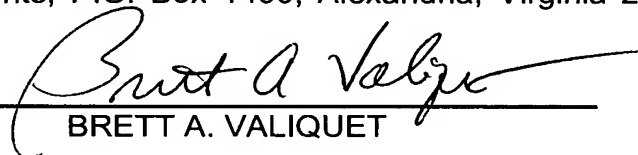
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